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U.S. Claims Violations By Soviets

Report Will Focus On Seven Cases in Arms Control Field

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Reagan administration officials said yesterday that the government will charge in a report, expected to be presented to Congress next week, that "Soviet violations, or probable violations, have occurred with respect to a number of arms control obligations and commitments."

But senior officials said that by pointing this out they were "not trying to engage in anti-Soviet behavior" or "make a propaganda issue out of this" and that "the president certainly has not concluded that, as a result, we should give up our search for serious arms control agreements."

Rather, the officials added, the question of compliance with existing agreements cuts to the heart of the matter of trust and confidence in the arms control process, and for that process to succeed such concerns have to be resolved.

The senior officials, who asked not be identified, briefed reporters yesterday on the contents of a 55-page classified report on Soviet transgressions. The administration has prepared the report in response to a congressional request last fall.

The report focuses on seven major studies of claimed Soviet violations or near-violations in the arms control field. However, all seven have been made public previously in general terms and the charges are well known.

The two areas where the administration flatly charges that there are clear violations involve Soviet use of chemical and biological weapons in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia and in claimed failure to comply with a

1975 agreement on advance notification of military maneuvers in Europe.

The report also concludes that the Soviets are in "violation" of the unratified 1979 SALT II strategic arms accord because they deliberately hid electronic signals from their missile flight tests.

The other four allegations, however, dealing with nuclear arms control, which has been the centerpiece of U.S.-Soviet negotiations over the past two decades, all contain qualifiers such as "probable" violations.

Nevertheless, the report, as described by officials, appears to be the toughest and most detailed analysis of questionable Soviet activity ever produced by an American administration and it is certain to play an important role in the intensifying political and foreign policy debate here and abroad about how to deal with Moscow.

There was intense pressure on the Reagan administration, especially from several conservative Republican lawmakers, to produce a tough report. Yet it appears that the administration has chosen its language carefully and has limited its investigation to seven rather well-known issues, most of which the Soviets have responded to in private discussions.

By doing so, other top officials said, they hoped to make the point with Moscow that the administration does take this matter seriously. Yet, by not using the report as a means to repudiate arms control and to claim that Moscow cannot be trusted under any circumstance, they also hope to signal the Kremlin that the administration is serious when it says it wants to resume a dialogue to iron out these and other issues.

This apparent strategy in handling the delicate issue of violations also may be designed to avoid frightening U.S. allies that the White House is seeking an all-out confrontation with Moscow on this issue.

The congressional amendment that ordered the report last fall contained no deadline. Officials claimed it was only "coincidence" that the critical report comes on the eve of a

presidential speech aimed at seeking a resumed dialogue with Moscow and a meeting next week in Stockholm between U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Soviet

Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko.

On the one hand, the timing of discussions on the critical report might seem incompatible with the serious but hopeful tone Reagan is expected to take in his speech Monday on U.S.-Soviet relations. Yet officials say Reagan will have a chance to put the report in perspective in his speech, and thus absorb its impact in the broader point that, despite differences, it is vital for the superpowers to try to reach agreement.

By keeping the congressional report classified, officials also are limiting its impact.

As described by officials, the seven abuses involve:

- "Repeated violations" of the 1925 Geneva protocol and the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention by Soviet use of chemical weapons, such as so-called "Yellow Rain," and toxin weapons in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. Reagan aired this charge during a speech at the United Nations last September. The Soviets have denied it.

- A "violation" of Moscow's "political commitment" to the 35-nation, 1975 Helsinki agreements, a portion of which relates to prior notification of troop movements beyond a certain size. The West was not notified of the East-bloc ZAPAD exercise in September, 1981. The Soviets claim that a newspaper article a day or two after the exercise began was notification.

- Construction of a large radar near Krasnoyarsk in the central U.S.S.R. is "almost certainly a violation of a legal obligation" under the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Some officials believe this is the most serious charge because it affects a treaty in being as opposed to the strategic arms accords which either have expired or were never ratified.

Administration officials believe this radar could be meant as a precursor to an expanded ABM net.

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